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The situation in Afghanistan

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Identical letters dated 10 January 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 9 January 2007 from Rangin Dadfar Spanta, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations (see annex).

I should be grateful if you circulated the enclosed letter as a document of the General Assembly, under item 16 of the agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Zahir **Tanin**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

07-20692 (E) 110107

Annex to the letter dated 10 January 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to draw your attention to the recent announcement of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan concerning its decision to fence and mine parts of its side of the Durand Line.

I take this opportunity to express the grave concern of the people and Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan concerning the aforementioned issue, and to communicate the following:

(a) While expressing gratitude to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for its cooperation in combating international terrorism, the Government of Afghanistan is of the firm conviction that in order to effectively combat this scourge, it is ever more important to address the sources that finance, train, arm and recruit terrorists and their ideological centres. To meet this objective, it is imperative that States Members, in particular countries of the region, fulfil their international obligations and implement the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, in particular resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1373 (2001);

(b) Given the manner in which terrorist activities are carried out in Afghanistan, it is evident that the mining and fencing of the border region will not prevent the infiltration of terrorists into Afghanistan's territory, and their subsequent subversive activities;

(c) As one of the countries that has suffered immensely from the planting of landmines during two decades of armed conflict, and despite the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan and its international partners to eliminate this danger, millions of mines and unexploded ordnance remain scattered throughout the country;

(d) Taking into consideration the structure of tribes and family ties among the people residing along the Durand Line, fencing and planting mines will not only separate thousands of families, but will also have unpredictable negative humanitarian implications.

In view of the above, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan strongly opposes the decision of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to fence and mine its side of the Durand Line, as it will not contribute to the fight against terrorism.

As a State party to the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Ottawa Convention), the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan calls upon all States to accede to the Convention, and bring about a halt to the production, stockpiling and use of landmines, which cause enormous casualties among innocent civilians.

(*Signed*) Rangin Dadfar **Spanta**
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Islamic Republic of Afghanistan